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EAST EUROPE BRANCH NOTES

28 Jan. 1974

State Dept. review completed

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ROMANIA

Happy Birthday Nicolae!

Saturday was Ceausescu's 56th birthday. We have yet to see any coverage of the event, but we will. Ceausescu is a vain man. Last year, his birthday was marked by a week of fawning tribute and, subsequently, several prominent leaders reportedly counseled him against encouraging this sort of hero worship which comes dangerously close to the cult of the individual.

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The King is Coming!

The Romanian media have finally announced that the visit of King Husayn of Jordan will take place shortly. Bucharest undoubtedly sought the visit as a token demonstration that its "balanced" Mideast policy has not seriously damaged its relations with the official Arab world.

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POLAND

Kneeling and Dealing

The visit of Archbishop Casaroli, the Vatican's "foreign minister," sometime in February will mark the next round of

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Warsaw's campaign to improve relations with the Holy See. Few results are expected, however, since Poland's powerful primate, Cardinal Wyszynski is strongly opposed to a deal with Rome except on his own terms. Meanwhile, church-state relations have plunged to a new low with the arrest of Father Piotr Zabielski following a dispute over his right to hold Mass in a private chapel. A strong church protest has shaken the regime at least to the point where it is making conciliatory noises.

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Plan Permutations Promote Pressures

Marginal changes in the five-year plan announced on January 19, could hike government outlays and cause inflationary pressures, in the opinion of our embassy in Warsaw. Many workers will receive raises; farmers will get more for certain products; and, some pensions and social benefits will be increased. However, the public will also be paying more for gasoline (up 70 percent), restaurant meals, and alcohol. The consumer, a powerful force in Polish society, is not likely to be pleased.

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YUGOSLAVIA

Problems with Returning Workers

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Official optimism over Yugoslavia's ability to absorb migrant workers returning home as a result of the energy crisis in Western Europe seems to be waning. [REDACTED] 25X1

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[REDACTED] officials in Belgrade said that the 50,000 Yugoslavs who have returned or will do so in the near future will swell the ranks of the already 300,000 unemployed. The return of these "guest workers" will also result in the loss of a valuable source of foreign currency. Yugoslavia's one million migrant workers provide the major portion of the government's \$1 billion foreign exchange reserves. [REDACTED]

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BULGARIA

Sofia's decision to play down the US seizure of one of its fishing boats off the New Jersey coast Saturday reflects its recent efforts at improving relations with Washington. A foreign ministry official told the embassy in Sofia that his government does not consider the incident overly serious, hopes it will be brought to a speedy conclusion, and does not intend to publicize the matter. The 80-man vessel was seized by the Coast Guard for illegally fishing within the nine-mile fisheries zone contiguous to US territorial waters. [REDACTED] 25X1

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Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP79B00864A001400010115-9

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